

Portable Fire Extinguishers

WAC 296-800-300

Summary

Important:

The following WISHA rule applies to the placement, use, maintenance, and testing of portable fire extinguishers provided for the use of employees. Your local fire marshall also enforces fire codes which address fire safety that are more comprehensive and may go beyond WISHA rules.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY:

To provide readily accessible, appropriate portable fire extinguishers for employees in your workplace

You must

Provide portable fire extinguishers in your workplace WAC 296-800-30005	Page 300-3
Select and distribute portable fire extinguishers in your workplace WAC 296-800-30010	Page 300-3
Make sure that portable fire extinguishers are kept fully charged, in operating condition, and left in their designated places WAC 296-800-30015	Page 300-5
Inspect and test all portable fire extinguishers WAC 296-800-30020	Page 300-5
Train your employees to use portable fire extinguishers WAC 296-800-30025	Page 300-9

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Summary

WAC 296-800-300 (Continued)



Exemptions:

- You are exempt from the requirements of portable fire extinguishers if you have the following:
 - A written fire safety policy that requires the immediate and total evacuation of employees from the workplace when there is a fire alarm signal
- AND**
- An emergency action plan and a fire prevention plan which meet the requirements of WAC 296-24-567
- AND**
- Portable fire extinguishers in your workplace that aren't accessible for employee use.
- If another WISHA rule requires portable fire extinguishers, then you must comply with these requirements.
- Where extinguishers are provided but aren't intended for employee use and you have an emergency action plan and a fire prevention plan (which meet the requirements of WAC 296-24-567), then only the requirements of WAC 296-800-30020 apply.



Note:

The introduction has important information about building, electrical and fire codes that may apply to you in addition to WISHA rules. See "How do the WISHA rules relate to building, fire and electrical codes" in the Introduction Section of this book.



Portable Fire Extinguishers

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Rule

WAC 296-800-30005

Provide portable fire extinguishers in your workplace

You must

- (1) Provide approved portable fire extinguishers for your workplace and distribute them so they are readily accessible.
 - Make sure that your portable fire extinguisher doesn't use extinguishing agents such as carbon tetrachloride or chlorobromomethane extinguishing agents. In addition, soda-acid foam, loaded stream, anti-freeze and water extinguishers of the inverting type shall not be recharged or placed into service.
- (2) Mount, locate, and identify portable fire extinguishers so employees can easily reach them, without being subjected to possible injury.

WAC 296-800-30010

Select and distribute portable fire extinguishers in your workplace



Exemption:

- This doesn't apply to the portable fire extinguishers provided for employees to use outside of workplace buildings or structures.
 - You are exempt from the distribution requirements of this rule if you have an emergency action plan (that meets requirements of WAC 296-24-567):
 - Which designates certain employees to be the only employees authorized to use the available portable fire extinguishers
- AND**
- Requires all other employees in the fire area to immediately evacuate the affected work area upon the sounding of the fire alarm.

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Rule

WAC 296-800-30010 (Continued)

You must

- Provide the correct type of portable fire extinguishers and distribute them in your workplace, depending on the type, size, and severity of fire that could occur.
 - The type of portable fire extinguishers you **must** have in your workplace depends on the types of fire hazards that exist in your workplace.

Type of fire hazard	Maximum distance from fire hazard to a fire extinguisher
Wood, cloth, paper, rubber (Class A Fire Hazards)	No more than 75 feet (22.9 m) Note: You may use uniformly spaced standpipe systems or hose stations instead of Class A portable fire extinguishers, if they meet the requirements of WAC 296-24-602 or 296-24-607
Liquids, grease, gases (Class B Fire Hazards)	No more than 50 feet (15.2 m) Note: You may choose to use a smaller fire extinguisher in lieu of that required for the 50 foot distance. If you choose to have the smaller fire extinguisher, the travel distance must not be greater than 30 feet. See UFC Standard 10 Chapter 3 for the basic minimum extinguisher rating allowed.
Live electrical equipment & circuits (Class C Fire Hazards)	Distribute any Class C portable fire extinguishers the same pattern that you have for any Class A or Class B fire hazards. Note: If the electrical equipment is de-energized, you may use a Class A or Class B portable fire extinguisher.
Powder, flakes, & residue from combustible metals, like magnesium & titanium, that build up over a 2-week period (Class D Fire Hazards)	No more than 75 feet (22.9 m)



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Rule

WAC 296-800-30015

Make sure that portable fire extinguishers are kept fully charged, in operable condition, and left in their designated places

You must

- Make sure that fire extinguishers found with deficiencies are removed from service and replaced with a suitable fire extinguisher.

WAC 296-800-30020

Inspect and test all portable fire extinguishers

You must

- Perform inspections:
 - Make sure that portable fire extinguishers or hose systems (used instead of fire extinguishers) are visually inspected monthly.
 - Perform maintenance checks:
 - Make sure that all portable fire extinguishers are subjected to an annual maintenance check.
 - Keep records of all annual maintenance checks and make available to the department upon request.
 - For 1 year after the last maintenance check
- OR**
- For the life of the shell, whichever is less.
 - Make sure that equal protection is provided when portable fire extinguishers are removed from service for maintenance and recharging.

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Rule

WAC 296-800-30020 (Continued)



Exemption:

Most stored pressure extinguishers don't require an internal examination. Examples of those that do require an internal examination are those containing a loaded stream agent.

You must

- Perform hydrostatic testing:



Exemption:

- Dry chemical extinguishers that have nonrefillable disposable containers are exempt from this requirement.
- Manually pressurized pumptanks are exempt from this requirement.

You must

- Make sure that portable extinguishers are hydrostatically tested
 - At the intervals listed in Table 1, of this section.
 - Whenever they show evidence of corrosion or mechanical injury.
- Not perform hydrostatic testing on fire extinguishers if:
 - The unit has been repaired by soldering, welding, brazing, or use of patching compounds.
 - The cylinder or shell threads are damaged.
 - Corrosion has caused pitting, including corrosion under removable name plate assemblies.
 - The extinguisher has been burned in a fire.
 - Calcium chloride extinguishing agents have been used in a stainless steel shell.



Note:

Specific rules regarding conducting hydrostatic tests are covered in WAC 296-24-59212.

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Rule

WAC 296-800-30020 (Continued)

You must

- Maintain records showing that hydrostatic testing has been performed. Provide the following evidence to the department upon request:
 - Date of test.
 - Test pressure used.
 - The serial number, or other identifier of the fire extinguisher that was tested.
 - Person or agency performing the test.
- Keep records until:
 - The extinguisher is retested

OR

 - The extinguisher is taken out of service, whichever comes first.
- Empty and maintain stored-pressure dry chemical extinguishers requiring a 12-year hydrostatic test, every 6 years.
 - When recharging or hydrostatic testing is performed, the 6-year requirement begins from that date.

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Rule

WAC 296-800-30020 (Continued)

Hydrostatic Test Table

Type of Extinguisher	Test Interval (Years)
Stored pressure water and/or antifreeze	5
Wetting agent	5
Foam (stainless steel shell)	5
Aqueous film forming form (AFFF)	5
Loaded stream	5
Dry chemical with stainless steel	5
Carbon dioxide	5
Dry chemical, stored pressure, with mild steel brazed brass or aluminum shells	12
Halon 1211	12
Halon 1301	12
Dry powder, cartridge or cylinder operated, with mild steel shell	12



Note:

Due to a manufacturers recall, stored pressure water extinguishers with a fiberglass shell (pre-1976) are prohibited from hydrostatic testing.



Portable Fire Extinguishers

WAC 296-800-300

Rule

WAC 296-800-30025

Train your employees to use portable fire extinguishers

You must

- Train your employees where you have provided portable fire extinguishers for their use in:
 - The hazards involved with incipient stage fire fighting (the early stage of a fire when it can be extinguished by a portable fire extinguisher).
 - The general principles of fire extinguisher use.
- Provide the training when they are first hired and then annually.



Helpful Tool:

Training Documentation Form

This sample Training Documentation Form can help you demonstrate in writing that each employee who needs training has received and understood it. You can find a copy of this sample form in the Resource Section of this book.

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Notes
